



## Resource #4: Testimony of James Robinson (excerpts from records of Southern Claims Commission)

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**Case No. 241—Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1872**

**James Robinson (col) sworn and examined by Counsel:**

Q. Where do you reside?

A. In Prince William Co. near Bull Run Virginia.

Q. How long have you been living there?

A. For 30 years.

Q. You lived there during the war?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you ever give any aid or comfort to the Confederates?

A. No sir, I have never done so in any shape or form.

Q. Did you ever talk about the war with any Confederates?

A. No sir.

Q. You talked with the Union people?

A. Yes sir, I talked with the Union people.

Q. What was the nature of your conversation with them?

A. Not much.

Q. You were talking about the war?

A. Not much for I didn't have much to say. I was a man of few words and when they rode up and would ask questions I would answer them.

Q. Did you express sympathy for the Union cause?

A. Of course I did.

Q. Did you ever give any aid or comfort to the rebels?

A. No sir, when they rode up to my house and called for a mouthful to eat, we were compelled to give it to them or they would have taken it.

Q. Did you give them any money or clothing?

A. No sir.

## Manassas / Resources

### Resource #4: James Robinson Testimony (cont'd)

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Q. And you never entertained any sentiments in opposition to the Union cause?

A. No sir, I never did.

Q. Did you live on a farm the whole time during the war?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Were you interrupted at all by the Confederate soldiers when they were there?

A. No sir, they behaved well to me somehow or other.

Q. Did they take any of your property?

A. They never took any from me but one of my horses.

Q. Which side were you on, were you in favor of the rebel army or the union army?

A. I was in favor of the union army.

Q. What made you in favor of the union army?

A. Well, there was a great deal of talk about the breaking up of our freedom and I was a free man and of course I couldn't be pleased with that idea—I scorned (?) the view of it.

Q. What was it that they told you about the breaking up of your freedom?

A. They said that those that were free would be broken up, and I was one of them.

Q. You thought that if the rebels succeeded, you would be reduced to slavery again?

A. Those were my feelings.

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Q. And you and your son were farming there during the war?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did your son remain there all the time during the war or did he come to Washington?

A. He would often be among the union men at headquarters and afterwards they sometimes employed him at chopping. I staid at home all the time myself.

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## Manassas / Resources

### Resource #4: James Robinson Testimony (cont'd)

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Q. Just tell the circumstances under which that corn was taken and by whom was it taken?

A. They marched in, in the night, and settled all around me. I was near the lines of both armies.

Q. Can you tell which army took it?

A. The union army. The rebel army couldn't get there. The armies were a mile or more apart.

Q. It was the union army that were around you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Well after they camped all around you, what happened?

A. Well the first thing they did in the night was they run afoul of my house and they commenced taking everything they wanted. Some went into the next house and got the meat, and the others rambled about the place taking fowls, and others found my wheat in the barn and they fed their horses on it.

Q. What about the hay?

A. The hay was taken: I wasn't allowed to go out on the place, the pickets were stationed around and they wouldn't let me pass. The hay was taken in the morning. I was taken just before day and carried off with the officers to show them some cross woods so that they could follow Jackson. I went into the field with them where the men were and they kept me till day light, and then they started to go to these cross woods and I followed them until we came in sight of Jackson's pickets, and when we came in eight of these pickets I said, "Gentlemen I can't go any further for Jackson's men are in the woods and I am going to get shot." But they said Jackson had gone and they were going to follow him. I couldn't tell who took the hay, all I know is that it was taken by the union people, because the southern people couldn't get there.

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Q. Had you any horses?

A. Yes sir, I had one (...) of horses worth 200 dollars or more.

Q. Your horses were worth 100 dollars a piece were they?

A. Yes sir, every bit of it.

## Manassas / Resources

### Resource #4: James Robinson Testimony (cont'd)

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Q. What were the circumstances of their being taken?

A. Sigel's men came and called for the horses.

Q. Was it this first night?

A. No sir, that was the next day. They came there Thursday night. They had a little brush or fight, and the next morning Gen. Sigel prepared for another fight and he went out and left Gen. Stahl in the house, and I asked him for a guard, and he paid no attention to me in the world and then found the horses were sorry and I went back again and he gave me no answer and my son came in and said, "They are going to break the lock" and I said, "Let them do it, because I cannot get a guard."

Q. How many soldiers were taking the horses?

A. Two.

Q. Do you know what they did with these horses?

A. No sir, they went right off in the field. They said they sent for them.

Q. Did you see them in possession of the soldiers afterwards?

A. No sir we looked to see if we could see them but we couldn't.

Q. How many soldiers were there about the horse at the time?

A. It is impossible for me to tell. They were like ants. There was a multitude of generals and their troops but I couldn't say how many there were altogether.

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Q. How about the cattle?

A. The (...) they drove off right before my face into the pines, and when I saw them I put after them and when I came up to the picket, he asked me what I wanted, and I told him I wanted my cattle and he said "My man you can't go there" and so I turned to go in another direction after them and a captain came along and asked where I was going and I told him where I was going and he said "My man let me tell you I have got some of the worst men out there that you ever saw and if you go out there, they will take you for a reb, and they will shoot you, and you had better think of your life than you do of your (...).

## Manassas / Resources

### Resource #4: James Robinson Testimony (cont'd)

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Q. What kind of cattle were these?

A. They were in good order.

Q. What size were they?

A. They were pretty large – they were as large as good sized millet (?) cows: they hadn't done growing.

Q. You have charged a great deal for them.

A. They were worth that then, Mr. Van Pelt got paid +60 for one of his.

Q. How much were these of yours worth?

A. I could have gotten +40 a piece for them and for three of them, I could have got the same as Mr. Van Pelt did.

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Q. How about the groceries and provisions in the house?

A. The soldiers came in and rifled (?) them - took everything they could get their hands on. They took two beds from me and there was a bed in another room and I disliked very much to have that go and I went to the door and asked the general who was standing there, if he was going to take everything from me tonight. He was an officer and I said to him, your men have taken everything else except this bed, and I asked him if they were going to take that too, and he said no my man, I am holding this bed for Gen. Sigel.

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Q. What reason did you say the men gave for taking these things?

A. They said they were out of provisions. Gen. Sigel said his boys were hungry: Gen. Sigel said they had to take them – he said. "My boys are hungry and must have them, and if you follow my army you shall not suffer."